(Vigo Co.)

The Ladies Aid Society of Rose Hill M.E. Church

Community Affairs File

Ts SEP 14 1975

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

The Rose Hill Methodist Church was built in 1869 by a group of God-fearing neighbors in Otter Creek Township, Vigo County, Ind. The brick church was located on the Range Line Road, one and a quarter miles north of Otter Creek. Other descriptions of its location are one and a half miles northeast of Ellsworth (early name for North Terre Haute), and on the northeast corner of the intersection of the Rosedale Road one mile east of Old U.S. 41.

Harvey Evans was one of the original founders of the church. His daughter, Mrs. Ritter, was the grandmother of Mr. Lloyd Ruszler, who had kept the old records among his family papers and loaned them to me before presenting them to the Vigo County Historical Society.

The old minutes book of the Ladies Aid Society offered a glimpse into the lives and times of the Otter Creek Community before the turn of the century.

On Dec. 2, 1897, the society was organized by the Rev. J. W. Richards, pastor of the little church. Charter members were Mmes. J. Modesitt, James Crabb, James H. Evans (Mr. Ruszler's great-grandmother), E. Evans, R. L. Black, J. W. Richards (minister's wife), Ura Johnson, Edd Crabb and I. Ritter.

They chose as their motto "She Hath Done What She Could." There were two classes of members, active and inactive, whose sworn purpose was to "be of service to the church in any material way possible ..and to aid the needy who come within range of our influence."

The ladies met at 2 o'clock on Wednesday afternoons every two weeks. They elected officers each six months. Dues were only ten cents a year and it took a two-thirds vote of the membership to vote the exclusion of a derelict member.

Mrs. Crabb was elected president, Mrs. Richards, vice president; Mrs. Evans, secretary and treasurer, and Mrs. Black, chaplain.

The big decision of the second meeting was what color to choose for the badges. After much discussion, the ladies finally selected pink, blue and white. In subsequent meetings, it was reported that the badges had been ordered, had arrived and were very attractive. In fact, it become so important to wear badges that members were fined for failure to do so. Which only goes to prove that Christian ladies with a sworn purpose to do good also had their little vanities.

At the third meeting, the ladies "took up quilting" as a ways and means project. They not only quilted for members and others in the community for a small charge, they also pieced and quilted quilts of their own making to sell to others. To relieve the monotony, they also "tacked" comforters, made aprons, sunbonnets and fancy sofa pillows.

In February, 1898, Mrs. Lizzie Belt, Mrs. Mamie Brooks and Mrs. Amanda Brooks became members. A committee was named for visiting new neighbors in the community—sort of an early day welcome club!

At the next meeting, the ladies sewed ten pounds of carpet rags and decided to charge five cens each for piecing quilt blocks for Mrs. Mamie Brooks.

In March more new members were voted in—Mrs. Lena Dickerson, Mrs. Sarah Crabb, Miss Mary Belt, Mrs. Theo. Curtin, Mrs. Dan Burgan and Mrs. Grandma Brooks.

Most of the earlier meetings were held at Lizzie Belt's house. She was the president and she also served the most delicious noon dinners. Mrs. Belle Evans and Mrs. Maggie Gottschalk became members.

In May, the group met at Maggie Orth's home and 12 visitors were present. Mrs. Emma Brotherton become a member. Readers must remember that in 1898 there was no radio and no television soap operas to entertain women at home. They were not even connected by telephone. The women looked forward to these social times and learning what was going on in the community around them. It was undoubtedly better to join the group than wonder what gossip they were missing by staying home.

In June, 1898, Mrs. Florence Johnson was elected president. During the summer months, the ladies worked on

Continued On Page 7, Col. 4.

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Dorothy Clark

Ts SEP 14 1975

Continued From Page 4.

quilts, talked, ate excellent dinners, talked and drank lots of lemonade at their meetings. The club treasury climbed to $100.

In the fall they decided to have all-day meetings with a carry-in dinner served at noon. This way they were able to finish more quilting and have more time for socializing. As many as 26 members attended regularly. They were fined for not attending and for not wearing their badge. Quilts were made of calico and silk. In 1898 thread cost three to five cents a spool and silk cost 25 cents a yard.

In January, 1899, Mrs. Belt was elected president again. Rev. Harry Ing was the preacher, o be followed by Rev John Vermillion. Their wives were acive in he Ladies Aid Sociey.

During the year the women worked on items for their first November Fair, and cleared more than $70 during the one day event. Mrs. Johnson was elected president in 1900. The group sold carpet they had made for 25 cents a yard. They also bought a five-gallon ice creaem freezer and some folding tables for their own use.

At the August meeting at the home of Mrs. Clare Evans, it was so hot the ladies decided to visit instead of work. Suddenly a threshing machine (the old fashioned steam kind) was sighted coming up the lane toward the house, and, to quote from the secretary's minutes, "consternation instantly prevailed amongst the ladies, and some of them exhibited great agility in getting out of the house, and accurd to where their horses were hitched. The horses, however, behaved in the most admirable manner showing very little concern for the machine driving ino the yard without accident..."

In March, 1901, the ladies voted to furnish material for a garden fence for the parsonage. The pastor was to build the fence and also make window screens.

The group had a real adventure in July when they were invited to meet at the new home of Mrs. Zenana Curtis, 915 N. Meridian, in Brazil, Ind. They boarded the electric car at 4th and Main Sts., in Terre Haute, at 9 a.m. Rev. Bentley, of the Brazil M. E. Church, invited the ladies to tour the new church during the afternoon.

The book closed with a listing of those who had paid dues for 1903. It will be placed on file in the library of the Vigo County Historical Society.

Historically Speaking

Ts DEC 28 1978

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

The celebration held Dec. 31, 1894, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the First Congregational Church was a notable event and one that was long remembered in Terre Haute.

Musical numbers by the best talent in the city were given, and several papers by older members of the church organization were read. Brief talks were given by prominent citizens including Col. R. W. Thompson, Co. W. E. McLean, Judge Willam E. Mack and Dr. W. R. Elder, all of whom attended the quarter centennial of the church 35 years previously.

According to the newspaper account of that occasion, "the exercises were opened by music by the choir and a prayer by the Rev. Dr. Leech of Centenary Methodist Church. The Rev. Dr. Drum, pastor of the church, announced the purpose of the gathering. The history of the church, the principal paper of the session, was read by C. C. Oakey."

The following are excerpts from this paper.

"In 1834, when Terre Haute was 18 years old, it was an incorporated town of about 800 inhabitants. Two years before it had but 600 people and a year later, in 1835, 1,200. At this time the tide of emigration had begun which was flowing rapidly westward."

"The little settlement of less than 200 families was clustered in the few blocks surrounding the court house, with a few scattered, tree-embowered homes along the high river bank, or Sycamore on the north, Oak on the south and one or two lone habitations east of Fifth street, which was the town's eastern limits."

"The hunter did not have far to go to find wild deer and the wolves and foxes were plenty. Stage coach lines connected the town with Cincinnati and Evansville and at least one mail a week was expected. A number of the houses were built of square logs, some covered with weather boarding and painted white with a little fresh green for trimming. Forest trees still grew throughout the town and in groves around it."

"Of the men and women in the place, they were of high character and very little professional piety. The majority had come from New England and the middle states. They brought with them their early training but not their churches for it was 15 years before they built their first little church. Before this they had started a library and supported a newspaper. They had a love for the intellectual exercises of preaching, for the men met sometimes at the court house to hear one of them read a sermon."

"An early preacher who visited Terre Haute in 1825 said it was a very good town for business, but no place for preaching. The Methodists had drawn one of their circuits around it in the beginning and a faithful circuit rider visited the place before it became a station."

"In 1834 eleven people, six men and five women of different sects, agreed to unite themselves in a church under the liberal but evangelical congregational policy. In all 17 united with the church in the beginning and outside around them, was a strong body of liberal men, not religious, but anxious to help this new undertaking."

"Rev. M. A. Jewett, who had been here earlier and had gone back east to get his wife and little boy, returned just before Christmas Eve. They had raised $405 to pay his first year's salary. The church was organized Dec. 30 by Judge Kinney, Alexander Rose, Mrs. Curtis Gilbert, Mrs. Cruft, Miss Boudinot and Miss Kinney. In the next seven years the membership grew to 98. Of these only two are alive today, Mrs. Mary Boudinot, who came into the church in 1838 and Harry Ross in 1839."

"The first church was occupied in 1837, an imposing edifice for that time, having cost about $9,000, and it was built beyond the city limits." In 1842 the church enjoyed a great revival gaining about 122 members. This revival was the first service of the kind in which Rev. Henry Ward Beecher ever was engaged.

"It was several years before the new and enlarged church was built in better style and at nearly double the cost of the first structure. Funds were received from the sale of pews, from $160 to $440 each. The buyers included many prominent families. In 1859 the church celebrated its 25th anniversary, and 18 days later Rev. Dr. Jewett tendered his resignation saying his shattered nerves were the reason. He was succeeded by

Community Affairs File
Vigo County Public Library
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

over

Dr Lyman Abott in 1860 In 1876 a $3.000 building was constructed for the Plymouth mission. Dr Abott resigned in 1865 and was succeeded by Rev E. F. Howe. Next came R Sanford Morton who remained until 1878 Thomas Ruthford Brown was called in 1878, resigned in 1880, and was succeeded by the Rev Henry M. Bacon until 1881 Rev Charles P Croft occupied the pulpit until 1884 and than came Rev J Leonard Corning. In 1887 M. A Dougherty came for a year Rev J H. Crum came from Winona, Minn. March 15, 1886, and still reigns."

Following the reading of the history there were several short talks and a number of letters from pastors were read

Historically Speaking

Ts OCT 10 1976

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Community Affairs File

The history of Oregon Baptist Church goes back to 1840, according to an account of Caroline Turner, one of the original or constituent members, given at the dedication of the first church building Oct.9,1887.

It seems "along about 1840, a Christian gentleman from Kentucky and John W. Turner...were walking up the hill just north of this place when the Kentuckian remarked, 'There ought to be a church planted here. It is such a good location.'".

Some forty years later, when the church was organized, Turner received a letter from the Kentuckian congratulating him, saying, "So you remember, John, that 40 years ago I selected that spot for a church?"

Brother Trueblood is said to have preached each second Sunday morning in the log building called the Oregon School House. It became so much the custom to attend church here that a Sunday School was organized and grew to a more permanent form after the frame school house was built about 1870. Prayer meetings were held here also.

In 1873, an arm was extended to these people by Mount Zion Church (near Youngstown). Rev. J. M. Turner was thei pastor and baptized several of the church members.

On Feb. 7, 1874, a meeting was called at Oregon School House for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Church. Felix S. Boyll presided, and Charles H. Taylor kept the minutes of the meeting.

The group adopted articles of faith, rules of decorum and church covenant and nineteen people handed in letter to become constituent members of the new Oregon Baptist Church.

They were Nicholas and Rachel A. Larkins, Felix S. and Margaret Boyll, Lucy M. Barbee, Sarah W. Simmons, Robert H. McCoskey, Dora B. LeForge, Henry B. and Jane Miller, Elijah LeForge, John W. and Deliza Turner, Charles H. Taylor, Hattie McCoskey, Susan Turner, Carrie Turner, and D.C. and Elizabeth Boyll.

The church elected Rev. J. M. Turner as the first pastor. On May 29, 1875, the church was recognized as a Regular Baptist Church by a council of delegates from First Prairie Creek, Second Prairie Creek, Mount Zion, Union, New Harmony, Salem, Bruletts Creek, Friendship and Mt.Pleasant churches, and Rev. J.K.Carr from Mt.Moriah Church.

The first record of building a church house was dated Feb.12,1876, when the trustees were instructed to procure a lot on which to build. A wesk later, a lot costing $200 was donated by Clinton H. McGrew, John W. Turner, Nicholas Larkins and Charles H. Tyler.

After deciding to build on the same plan as the Hartford Church, subscriptions for donated timber were received. D.W.Davis gave five trees and 24 pillars; Elijah LeForge gave six trees, and N.Larkins offered 16 trees. The lumber was sawed at a cost of $115, but the church found themselves unable to go on with the building at that time, and the matter rested for some years.

From the church records, it is noted that nine very discouraging years passed, many of the older members died, and several others took dismissal letters. A few were lost by exclusion because of non-attendance or other disciplinary reasons.

Durlng those nine years, six different pastors were often absent. One was even deposed from the ministry. Those who remained decided to purchase the school house when it came on the market.

Business meetings in those days were held monthly on Saturday afternoons. Church services were heid on Saturday night. Sunday School at 10 a.m., was followed by church services at 11 a.m., and again on Sunday evening.

It is difficult for modern day church-goers to visualize the conditions of church life in the days around the turn of the century when the dirt roads were often impassable.

Winter nights people trudged along the sides of the roads or walked across the fields in single file, lighting their way with kerosene lanterns. What an impressive sight those swinging lanterns must have been in the darkness as they converge on the church from all directions.

And the evening service under the soft glow of oil lamps

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

must have been effective in its simplicity and in the close fellowship of friends and neighbors.

The centennial anniversary of the church was held Sept.22, 1974.

Earliest days of Maria Creek, Prairie Creek churches' recalled

Churches (Early)

The APR 2 1979

Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

The first Baptist church in the Indiana Territory, as well as one of the first Protestant churches, Maria Creek Baptist Church was founded May 20, 1809, approximately 35 miles north of Vincennes. It continued in service to its members until about 1947, when it was abandoned except for occasional Homecoming events.

In 1965, efforts were made to move the church to the campus of Vincennes University in order to perpetuate its rich heritage. Architects took accurate measurements; pews, pulpits, and various artifacts were gathered together, and even the brick was transported to the University campus.

However, the re-construction of the building from the old materials proved to be impractical, and a new building was constructed in replica and completed in 1969. It now serves as an interdenominational chapel for the campus and commuting community under the name of Maria Creek Chapel.

The various papers and records of the church were presented to the Archives of Vincennes University for preservation. The manuscripts telling the story of the early days of organization, the determination and hardships of the early settlers, are available in the Lewis Historical Library.

One of the early members, Joseph Chambers, wrote a brief history of the church and its affiliation with the Union association and the Wabash District association.

He told how five churches met in convention July, 1809, at Columbus, then in Knox county, now Gibson county. They included Wabash, Bethel, Puttoca, Salem Creek and Maria Creek. The ministers were Alexander Devine, Samuel Jones and Isaac McCoy.

By 1815, the association had grown to eleven churches, six ordained ministers, three licensed ministers and 366 members. On Oct. 5, 1822, the association met at the Prairie Creek Church in Vigo county. At this time there were twelve Baptist churches with a total of 708 members.

Difficulties arose between the churches by 1827, and between their [illegible] about creeds begins in this association in 1833." He attributed the break to the north end of the Union Association becoming alarmed by the progress of Campbellism in the south causing them to petition for division. This resulted in the formation of Curry's Prairie Association in 1835.

Signing the 1809 charter of Maria Creek Church were Samuel and Phebe Allison, Charles Polk, Sr. and Jr., Margaret and Alsha (?) Polk, William and Sally Polk, John and Polly Lemmen (Lemon), William and Sally Bruce, and John Morris, "man of colour."

In 1810, Brother Isaac McCoy and his wife, Christianny, were received. He presented his license as a preacher from Silver Creek Church, Clark county, Indiana Territory, and was approved as a preacher. He was ordained at a later meeting.

Elizabeth, the wife of Joseph Chambers, became a member in 1810. He wrote, "this is the beginning of happy days to this little flock in the wilderness surrounded by the red men of the forest and all difficulties to which the settlement of new countries are subjected."

Joseph Liston and his wife, Nancy, were baptized on Nov. 18, 1810, the first baptism in the little church. For some reason, Elizabeth Chambers was not immersed until January, 1811. (Surely the water would have been a little warmer in October?)

A request was made by members on the other side of the Wabash river to form a church on that side. A round log cabin, 24 feet square, was raised in December, 1810.

Owing to the "situation on the frontier in regard to the Indian alarms," the church failed to meet in April, but met on May 16, 1812.

On May 16, 1818, some of the members formed the Prairie Creek Church in Vigo county.

McCoy preached at missions in

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Illinois and Missouri, and in 1818 was on Raccoon Creek trying to civilize the Indians. He and his wife took letters of dismission to go to Fort Wayne to continue their missionary work among the Indians. Tessa Cox, "a man of couler," accompanied them.

Elder Aaron Frakes of Vigo county died Feb. 23, 1821. He was credited with bringing in many members during revivals to churches in Vigo, Sullivan and Knox counties.

Joseph Chambers was born in 1787 in Tennessee. When the Indians massacred the nearest neighbors, the father removed his family to Kentucky. In 1797 to 1799, they moved into Ohio. He described his parents as poor. They raised seven children.

Joseph was 21 years old when the family moved to the Indiana Territory in the spring of 1808. After the family was settled, Joseph returned to Butler county, Ohio, during the winter of 1809-10 to marry Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Sanuel and Elizabeth Ferguson, and returned with his bride to Indiana.

He confessed to card playing and occasional drinking until his conversion to the Baptist faith in October, 1810, by Elders William McCoy (father of Isaac) and George Waller from Shelby county, Ky. He and his wife were baptized in January, 1811, and united with Maria Creek Church along with their eldest son, then only two months old. He and his wife had eleven children.

Chambers described the year 1811 with these words: "Now the Indian depradations commenced all the country north of this inhabited by men of savage life...our horse is taken off...our neighbors shot down, stripped and skelped in the immediate vicinity...the Clerk of the church returned from the Battle of Tippecanoe wounded by a shot from the savage rifle...not one church member lost."

Community Affairs File

Vincennes University offers Maria Creek Church information

Ts MAY 20 1979

Historically Speaking

Community Affairs File

By Dorothy Clark

Vincennes University has published a paperback booklet entitled "Maria Creek Church Papers and Related Historical Documents." Edited by Cornelia Carter, the booklet includes correspondence between the Maria Creek and Lamont (later called LaMotte) churches and 1809 to 1821 accounts of the Wabash District Association and the Union Association of Baptists.

Copies of the publication may be purchased in the President's office at V U. The price is $3. The original documents and complete minutes can be found in the Lewis Historical Collections Library.

The Maria Creek Baptist Church was founded May 20, 1809 in what was then the Indiana Territory. It was located approximately 35 miles north of Vincennes. This church was the first Baptist church in the Territory, as well as one of the first Protestant churches. It continued in service to its members until about 1947, at which time it was abandoned except for occasional Homecoming events.

In 1965, efforts were made to move the church to the campus of V U., in order to perpetuate the rich heritage. Architects took accurate measurements, pews, pulpits and various artifacts were gathered together, and even the brick was transported to the V. U. campus.

However, the construction of the building from the old materials proved to be impractical, and a new building was constructed in replica and completed in 1969. It now serves as an interdenominational chapel for the campus and community under the name of Maria Creek Chapel.

The papers and records in the Archives of V. U. tell the story of those early days of organization, determination and hardships, which the early settlers encountered.

Maria Creek was constituted in 1809 by Alex Diven and James McQuaid. Charter members included Samuel and Phebe Allison, Charles Polke, Sr. and Jr., Margaret Alsha(?), William and Sally Polke, John and Polly Lemmen, William and Sally Bruce, and John Morris, "a man of colour."

In July, 1809, the Wabash District Association of Baptist churches was formed with five churches meeting in the "town of Columbus on Pattoca then Knox County now Gibson County, Indiana."

Brother Isaac McCoy, a licensed preacher, was invited to attend, and he and his wife, "Christianny," were welcomed in June, 1810, when they arrived from the Silver Creek church, Clark county, Indiana Territory, to preach at Maria Creek.

New members continued to be accepted, including Joseph and Elizabeth Chambers, and Joseph and Nancy Liston. By December, 1810, the congregation had decided on the site to erect a meeting house and raised a round log cabin 24 feet square.

In the fall of 1811, a member from Kentucky was baptized. Because the man was a slave holder, William Bruce objected and was excluded. The church had formed its policy on the question of slavery. "We think that African slavery as it exists in some parts of the United States is unjust in its origin and oppressive in its consequences and inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, but viewing our situation in this territory as the laws does not tolerate slavery we think it inexpedient to meddle with the subject in a church capacity."

By 1815, the Wabash Association had grown to include eleven churches, six ordained and three licensed preachers, and 366 church members.

In 1821, Elder Isaac McCoy, a former pastor of Maria Creek, was reported as "labouring with the northern Indians." He was in Parke county, near Raccoon Creek. All Baptists contributed one cent per week to support the Indian missions.

Former pastor, Elder Aaron Frakes, of Vigo county, passed away Feb. 23, 1821.

On Oct. 5, 1822, twelve churches convened at Prairie Creek Baptist church in Vigo county. Nine persons were baptized, bringing the total membership to 708. During that year, all the churches south of White river organized the Salem Association.

The next year, Maria Creek hosted the Wabash Association meeting. Since the growing dispute between Bruce and Chambers concerning the Indian missions could not be settled, it was decided, in the interests of harmony, to divide into two associations using the Wabash river as the line. The new association was called Union.

According to Joseph Chambers, the clerk who kept the minutes, the Union Association was organized in September, 1824, after previously being dismissed from the Wabash District in October, 1823.

The churches meeting in convention at Little Black church in Sullivan county were Wabash, Maria Creek, Busseron, Union and Bogg's Creek, and represented 232 Baptists.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

Elder James Anderson, pastor of Maria Creek, led off the discussions. Other churches mentioned were Little Pidgeon, Salem, Blue River and White River.

One of the main items of controversy in those early Baptist church troubles was Elder Parker. It seems that reports had been circulated during 1823-24 that Parker "had been guilty of a connection with counterfeiters or passing counterfeit money or bank bills, etc." Because of all the problems, the association had dropped to seven churches and 205 members before Elder Parker left the state.

Under other ministers, by 1827 there were 21 churches and 652 members. No regular minutes were kept after 1828 for this early group.

About the matter Joseph Chambers said: "In regard to your request for my views upon the influance which Parkerism has had upon the Baptist denomination in the Wabash Valley, I shall say but little from the fact that it will be reather occupying daingerous ground for me to enter upon in the last stages of life. I mutch desire to spend the last remnant alotted for me in peace with all men.

"But here are a few thoughts which are the sentiments of my vairy heart (towit): The Parkerietes have drove and the Cambbellites had led until a large portion of the regular Baptists are uppon the vairy brink of idolatrous worshippers ....."

Parker was described as a zealous minister who preached almost everywhere to everybody, from Illinois to Texas and back to Illinois, and then made up a colony which he led to Texas. They made the trip by land, and every night during the journey they gathered around the campfire and held religious services. In Texas, the group was known as the Pilgrim Church.

Parker served as State Senator in the Third and Fourth General Assemblies and was an active and able legislator. He was plain and unpolished, a diamond in the rough state, and said to be honest to a fault and kindly.

Daniel Parker and Thomas Kennedy were the first "Hardshell" Baptist preachers in Crawford county, Ill. They preached without money or price, according to the history books. Elder Newport was an early Baptist minister, but he lived in Clark county.

Elder Kennedy was considered more liberal than Parker. He became the first treasurer of Crawford county, Ill., and was the county commissioner of schools, the probate judge, etc.

Asbury's Bell tolled for years

Even after it was replaced, bell served congregation

TS Jan 5, 1992

Clark Dorothy

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

More than 150 years ago, early Methodists in Terre Haute had been meeting at the first county courthouse and in "The Indian Chief," an early inn and barroom on Main Street near the Wabash River.

In 1834 they built a cheaply constructed meeting house on a plot of ground at Fourth and Poplar streets, set aside for their use by the town council.

However, they were still dependent on the visits of the circuit riding ministers. For 20 years or more they dreamed of a full-time minister, and a real church of brick and stone and a tall spire.

In 1841, they achieved their dream and built the Asbury Chapel, named in honor of Francis Asbury, founding father of the American Circuit Riders, who later became a bishop in the Methodist Church. The church was completed before the end of the year with one exception. Funds were scarce, and they could not agree upon the bell, so the church was without a bell for two years.

Asbury's bell was purchased and hung in the tower, and for 50 years it called Methodists to worship, to weddings and christenings, and sadly tolled the deaths during the Civil War.

The town became a city, the church prospered and grew, with its own full-time minister. A new generation saw an inadequate and antiquated building badly in need of repair and in the wrong part of town. Members agitated to move and follow the population eastward.

But times were hard, money was scarce, and it took time to build the fine new church at Seventh and Poplar streets. They named it "The First Methodist Episcopal Church."

Old-timers wanted to move the bell, but the planners decided the church must have a new bell, a more modest bell, in the tower.

The old bell was removed to be melted down, a bit more brass added, and molded into dozens of bell-shaped paperweights sold to help defray building costs. The inscription was "Old Asbury's Bell 1843-95."

The years passed. Another generation and another inspection disclosed a dire need for repairs. Nearly 200 of the bell-shaped castings were discovered during remodeling under a stairway.

Enid Royer, church secretary, gave some of them to a teacher at the newly organized Gerstmeyer Technical High School. He instructed his shop students in making them into handbells.

These bells were given to the young people of Methodist Temple as wedding gifts, until the supply was exhausted.

Again Royer remembered there were a few more of the little bell castings stored in the attic. A longtime church member, Clifford Kylander, was a master craftsman with his own machine shop in his home.

Undertaking the task, he found not a few, but 59 hunks of metal to take home and begin work. After many hours, he transformed the castings into 59 beautiful brass handbells. They still sounded the clear tones of old Asbury's bell.

Kylander's widow, Dorothy, living in an Oak Ridge, Tenn., retirement center in 1990, added a sequel to the story. The bells were sold for $5 each in 1967, then two years later for $10 each, and this money was added to the building fund. This marked the end of Old Asbury's bell, but the fine new one which replaced it in 1895 now hangs in the bell tower in the Court Yard of United Methodist Temple at 5001 Dixie Bee Road.

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Living in the 1840s

(21)

Early church members rented room for worship

Ts DEC 06 1992

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

It has been commented that a dollar went much farther in the days when George Washington is supposed to have thrown a dollar across the Potomac River.

A dollar in those days was much harder to acquire. Old journals and cash books show this to be true.

Many of the early churches met in the courthouse or in the home of some church members. This was true of St. Stephen's until the congregation rented a room on the second floor of the building that stood on the southeast corner of Third and Ohio streets.

This was the property of James Johnston, one of the congregation, and in 1842 a subscription "for the salary of the minister and the expenses of the room, etc.," raised $334. Many of the names were those of others than church members, and quite a number of the amounts are not marked paid.

Only two of the subscribers paid $25. The others ranged from $10 to as little as $1. At the bottom of the list was a note — "Extract from the record of the vestry. Your salary as rector of the parish will be at least $250 per annum for three years to commence this date." This was dated Feb. 3, 1842, and signed by W.F. Krumbhaar, secretary of the vestry.

Members of the early congregation were Dr. Richard Blake, Joseph and James Grover, George Bourne, G.W. Langworthy, Thomas E. Blake, Jacob B. Early, Dr. Ebenezer Daniels, John P. Usher, L.A. Booth, Joseph O. Jones, H.D. Williams, Harmon Blood, Levi G. Warren, Aaron B. Fontaine, James Whitcomb, Charles Groverman, John W. Watson, John Routledge and J.F. King.

Women who signed were Agnes and Eunice Saltenberry, Elizabeth McClellan and Catherine.

Late signers included James Johnston, John Britton, Dixon Porterfield, John Worner and John Milner.

The next year there were more newcomers and converts to the growing congregation. Among these were Jesse Conrad, the newspaper editor; Charles Wood; Matthew Steward of the hotel; and Thomas Fearns, first to sell ice cream in Terre Haute.

Also, Thomas Dowling, the publisher; C.W. Barbour, Amory Kinney and Judge Gookins, the attorneys; Beebe Booth and Dayton Topping. All subscriptions were finally collected by 1845.

Another $708 was subscribed for the planned new building on Fifth Street between Wabash and Cherry streets. Some of the new donors whose names appeared for the first time were Robert B. Croes, the rector; R. Scouten; James S. Clark of the Clark House at Second and Ohio; Alexander McGregory and J.M. Mullikin.

In 1845 two new subscribers were added: James Farrington and William J. Ball, resident engineer of the Wabash & Erie Canal then being built between Terre Haute and Lafayette.

As the work on the building continued, records show Joseph Grover rendered bills for materials used on the church including a stove, $12; more than 62 pounds of pipe, $12.50; elbows, 60 cents; iron, $5; wood, $2; and drayage on the pipe, 13 cents. He also billed the rector for various sized nails, $45.56 total.

On Nov. 25, 1848, H.D. Milns rendered a bill for $40 for various items connected with the church lot, including "hauling manure $5; cutting rails $8; setting them up $2; 7 days hauling $9; and bridge toll $5." He also needed to be reimbursed for paying $10 cash to the rector, and $1 to Mr. Krumbhaar.

The 1848 list of subscribers included more new names: David Taylor, William K. Edwards, D.S. Danaldson, and a $5 contribution from Point Commerce, later Worthington, Ind.

The year 1848 saw changes in downtown Terre Haute. A solid block of frame structures known as "Dutch Row" on the north side of Wabash west from Fourth to the alley was one of the first to be replaced by the owners. They joined together to erect "Union Row," a handsome three-story brick for the full half-block. Ludovici & Hulman were the first tenants in the third room from the alley.

The balance of that row was known as "Scott's Row," a decrepit collection of frame buildings, but including a two-story brick, formerly the Light Horse Harry Tavern, our second early house of entertainment.

On the morning of Dec. 2, 1850, fire broke out in Biehl's Coffee House and spread to include all the half-block and around the corner at Third and Market. The loss was estimated at $12,000 including contents.

The principal owners were W.D. Griswold, Ezra W. Smith and John Routledge. They joined with other owners in the erection of a new building named "Phoenix Row" for the fabled bird that rose from his own ashes.

The Farrington block and its neighbor at the northwest corner of Third and Wabash was replaced by the Shandy Building when a fire destroyed the home of Farrington. Across the alley to the north of this building stood the Dole Building, and of this the Wabash Courier said in 1849: "Farrington's new two-story brick corner of Third and National Road is done."

The news release went on to tell: "Messers. Dole have erected a large three-story brick on Third north of Farrington's." This building was a hospital during the Civil War.

At the northeast corner of Sixth and Cherry stood a large frame house once owned by Joseph O. Jones and occupied for many years by Charlotte Keller as a very popular boarding house.

She sold the property to James Hunter for the building of his laundry. He sold the old house for removal to the northeast corner of Sixth and Sycamore.

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA